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12	UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT		
13	FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA		
14	LISAMARIA MARTINEZ,	Case No. 3:20-CV-06570-TSH	
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1.6	Plaintiff,	AMENDED COMPLAINT FOR	
16		DISCRIMINATION IN VIOLATION OF	
17	V.	THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT, CALIFORNIA GOVERNMENT	
18	COUNTY OF ALAMEDA, MELISSA WILK, in her individual capacity, EVA HE,	CODE § 11135, AND THE CALIFORNIA DISABLED PERSONS ACT	
19	in her individual capacity, MARIA LAURA	DISABLED I ERSONS ACT	
20	<b>BRIONES</b> , in her individual capacity,	DEMAND FOR JURY TRIAL	
	Defendants.	DEMAND FOR JUNE TRIAL	
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**INTRODUCTION** 1 2 Plaintiff Lisamaria Martinez is an independent blind entrepreneur. She brings this action against Defendants Alameda County and individual county personnel to remedy their 3 discriminatory denial of county services due to Ms. Martinez's disability. Defendants unlawfully 4 5 operate the Alameda County Clerk-Recorder's Office in a manner that ensures no blind person can access its services because no staff person will read and scribe paperwork necessary to do 6 business there. As a result, Ms. Martinez has lost valuable time, suffered demeaning treatment, 7 and is precluded from using the same services that the office offers to non-disabled persons. 8 Ms. Martinez asks this court for a declaration that Defendants' policies and practices of 9 denying services to persons who require them because of their disability are illegal. She also asks 10 11 for an order enjoining Defendants from following those policies and engaging in those practices in the future. Finally, she asks for minimum statutory awards, compensation for past harm, and 12 attorneys' fees and costs. 13 **PARTIES** 14 15 Plaintiff Lisamaria Martinez is a resident of California and lives at 34904 Herringbone Court in Union City, California. 16 Defendant Alameda County is a municipality of California, and has offices at 1221 Oak 17 Street in Oakland, California. 18 5. Defendant Melissa Wilk is the Alameda County Auditor-Controller/Clerk-Recorder and is 19 20 sued in her individual capacity. 6. Defendant Eva He is the Assistant Clerk-Recorder for Alameda County and is sued in her 21 22 individual capacity. 23 Defendant Maria Laura Briones is a Supervisor in the Alameda County Clerk-Recorder's office and is sued in her individual capacity. 24 JURISDICTION AND VENUE 25 26 This is an action for declaratory, injunctive, compensatory, and statutory relief pursuant to 27 Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act ("ADA"), 42 U.S.C. §§ 12101 et seq.; Title V of the

1	ADA, 42 U.S.C. § 12203; California Government Code § 11135; and California's Disabled	
2	Persons Act ("DPA"), Cal. Civ. Code § 54 et seq.	
3	9. This Court has jurisdiction over the federal claims in this action pursuant to 28 U.S.C. §§	
4	1331 and 1343, and over the pendant state law claims pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1367.	
5	10. This court has jurisdiction to issue a declaratory judgment pursuant to 28 U.S.C. §§ 2201	
6	and 2202.	
7	II. Venue is proper in this court pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1391(b) because Defendants are	
8	located within this District and the acts and omissions giving rise to this claim have occurred	
9	within this District.	
10	FACTS	
11	12. Ms. Martinez is blind.	
12	13. On March 29, 2019, Ms. Martinez went to the Alameda County Clerk-Recorder's Office	
13	to file a fictitious business name statement for her new small business.	
14	14. Prior to her visit, she had downloaded the proper form from the acgov.org website to	
15	complete electronically using the screen access software she uses when reading and writing.	
16	15. Most of the fields on the form were accessible fillable fields that allowed Ms. Martinez to	
17	fill them out independently using screen access software; however, the form offered no accessible	
18	way to sign it, such as through an electronic signature. Instead, Ms. Martinez was forced to	
19	request assistance from a sighted person, after printing out the form, to help her manually sign	
20	the printed document's signature line.	
21	16. Ms. Martinez obtained assistance at home in manually signing the printed document's	
22	signature line, and brought the form with her to the Clerk-Recorder's office.	
23	17. At the Clerk-Recorder's office, Ms. Martinez waited for her number to be called, and then	
24	spoke with an agent at the counter, Angelina. Angelina told Ms. Martinez that the fictitious	
25	business name was for a limited liability company ("LLC"), but that Ms. Martinez had filled out	
26	the form as an individual, and would have to correct the form in order to file it. Angelina said	
27	that the form had checkboxes for "LLC" and for "individual," and that Ms. Martinez had	
28	checked "individual" and entered her name in that area, but had elsewhere indicated that she was	

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be filled out by the business owner.

independent and did not travel with non-blind persons to assist her. Ms. Briones repeated what

Ms. Martinez because the office required legal documents such as the fictitious business form to

Angelina had told Ms. Martinez: that no one from the Clerk-Recorder's office could assist

1	32. On information and belief, Defendant Wilk is responsible for directing the Clerk-	
2	Recorder's Office to deny assistance to blind persons requiring such assistance in the Clerk-	
3	Recorder's Office.	
4	FIRST CAUSE OF ACTION	
5	Title II of the ADA (42 U.S.C. § 12132) (Defendant Alameda County)	
6	33. Plaintiff re-alleges and incorporates herein all previously alleged paragraphs of the	
7	Complaint.	
8	34. As a blind person, Ms. Martinez is a qualified person with a disability under the ADA. 42	
9	U.S.C. §§ 12102 and 12131(2).	
10	35. Title II of the ADA, 42 U.S.C. § 12132, states that "no qualified individual with a	
11	disability shall, by reason of such disability, be excluded from participation in or be denied the	
12	benefits of the services, programs, or activities of a public entity, or be subjected to	
13	discrimination by any such entity."	
14	36. As a local government, Defendant Alameda County is a public entity subject to Title II of	
15	the ADA. 42 U.S.C. § 12131(1)(a); 28 C.F.R. § 35.104.	
16	37. Public entities such as Defendant are required to "take appropriate steps to ensure that	
17	communications with applicants, participants, [and] members of the public with disabilities	
18	are as effective as communications with others." 28 C.F.R. § 35.160(a)(1).	
19	38. That obligation requires Defendant to "furnish appropriate auxiliary aids and services	
20	where necessary to afford individuals with disabilities an equal opportunity to participate in,	
21	and enjoy the benefits of" Defendant's services, programs, and activities. 28 C.F.R. §	
22	35.160(b)(1).	
23	39. Auxiliary aids and services include qualified readers and other effective methods of	
24	making visually delivered materials available to individuals with visual impairments. 42 U.S.C. §	
25	12103(1)(B); 28 C.F.R. § 35.104.	
26	40. The Title II regulations explain that "[t]he type of auxiliary aid or service necessary to	
27	ensure effective communication will vary in accordance with the method of communication used	

1	by the individual; the nature, length, and complexity of the communication involved; and the
2	context in which the communication is taking place." 28 C.F.R. § 35.160(b)(2).
3	41. They further state that "[i]n order to be effective, auxiliary aids and services must be
4	provided in accessible formats, in a timely manner, and in such a way as to protect the privacy
5	and independence of the individual with a disability." 28 C.F.R. § 35.160(b)(2).
6	42. Public entities, such as Defendant, must "give primary consideration to the requests of
7	individuals with disabilities" when determining what types of auxiliary aids and services are
8	necessary. 28 C.F.R. § 35.160(b)(2).
9	43. A public entity, such as Defendant, may not require an individual with a disability to
10	bring someone with them to facilitate communication. 28 C.F.R. § 35.160(c)(1).
11	44. Ms. Martinez requested assistance completing paperwork to apply to use a fictitious
12	business name.
13	45. Such assistance is an auxiliary aid or service.
14	46. The context of Ms. Martinez's communication with Defendant was as follows: (a)
15	Ms. Martinez was at the Clerk-Recorder's Office; (b) a paper form needed to be completed and
16	signed; (c) Ms. Martinez was not able to complete and sign the paperwork without assistance
17	because of her disability; and (d) Ms. Martinez was speaking with a staff person who was
18	capable of reading the paperwork to Ms. Martinez, appropriately filling in the information
19	provided by Ms. Martinez and assisting Ms. Martinez to sign in the appropriate place on the
20	paper form.
21	47. Given that context, Ms. Martinez's requested auxiliary aid or service was necessary for
22	effective communication between Ms. Martinez and Defendant.
23	48. Defendant was required to give primary consideration to Ms. Martinez's request for
24	assistance.
25	49. Instead, Defendant indicated that Ms. Martinez should have brought another person to
26	help her complete the paperwork.

50. Defendant refused to provide any auxiliary aid or service at all to Ms. Martinez.

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59. By failing to modify its policies, practices, and procedures regarding staff assistance,

including assistance with filling out paperwork to blind persons such as Ms. Martinez, where

1	those modifications are necessary to avoid discrimination on the basis of disability, Defendant
2	has violated and continues to violate the ADA.
3	60. By failing to modify its policies, practices, and procedures to notify and train staff about
4	their obligations to provide assistance where necessary to ensure that persons with disabilities,
5	such as Ms. Martinez, do not suffer discrimination because of their disability, Defendant has
6	violated and continues to violate the ADA.
7	61. Public entities, such as Defendant, may not, on the basis of an individual's disability,
8	deny or provide different or unequal access to its aids, benefits, or services, or otherwise limit the
9	enjoyment of any right, privilege, advantage, or opportunity conferred by those aids, benefits, or
10	services. 28 C.F.R. §§ 35.130(b)(1)(i)-(iv) and (vii).
11	62. By refusing to provide assistance completing paperwork to blind individuals in the Clerk
12	Recorder's Office, Defendant denies, provides unequal or different access to, or otherwise limits
13	those individuals' enjoyment of the opportunity to benefit from the services offered at the Clerk-
14	Recorder's Office, and has thus violated and continues to violate the ADA.
15	63. Ms. Martinez has experienced, and will continue to experience, exclusion from
16	Defendants' services, programs, and activities because of Defendants' actions and policies that
17	deny her assistance necessary to complete paperwork at the Clerk-Recorder's Office, in violation
18	of Title II of the ADA and its implementing regulations.
19	64. Ms. Martinez experienced humiliation, indignity, frustration, and emotional distress due
20	to Defendants' discriminatory refusal to provide assistance she required because of her disability
21	65. Defendants' policies and conduct constitute both a past and ongoing violation of Title II
22	of the ADA and its supporting regulations that inflicted and continue to inflict injuries for which
23	Ms. Martinez has no adequate remedy at law.
24	66. Equitable relief is necessary to stop Defendant's current and future violation of the ADA,
25	as legal relief is insufficient.
26	67. Defendants' policies and conduct was intentional or was deliberately indifferent to
27	Ms. Martinez's right to receive assistance necessitated by her disability.

1	68. As a result of Defendants' violations, Ms. Martinez suffered and continues to suffer
2	damages.
3	69. Title II authorizes this Court to award reasonable attorneys' fees as part of the costs. 42
4	U.S.C. § 12133; 29 U.S. Code § 794a(b).
5	SECOND CAUSE OF ACTION
6	Title V of the ADA (42 U.S.C. § 12203(b)) (Individual Defendants) <sup>1</sup>
7	70. Plaintiff re-alleges and incorporates herein all previously alleged paragraphs of the
8	Complaint.
9	71. It is unlawful to "interfere with any individual in the exercise or enjoyment of" any right
0	protected under the ADA. 42 U.S.C. § 12203(b); 28 C.F.R. § 35.134(b).
11	72. By operating and administering the Clerk-Recorder's Office and directing staff and
12	programs therein in a manner that discriminates against persons who require assistance
13	completing paperwork because of their disability, including Ms. Martinez, in violation of Title II
14	of the ADA, Defendants Melissa Wilk, Eva He, and Maria Laura Briones interfered with
15	Plaintiff's right to be free from discrimination by public entities as protected by Title II of the
16	ADA.
17	73. By refusing or directing others to refuse to provide auxiliary aids and services in the form
18	of staff assistance with paperwork that is necessary to ensure effective communication with blind
19	persons, including Ms. Martinez, in violation of Title II of the ADA, Defendants interfered with
20	Plaintiff's right to be free from discrimination by public entities as protected by Title II of the
21	ADA.
22	74. By requiring or directing others to require blind persons, including Ms. Martinez, to bring
23	another person with them to complete paperwork, in violation of Title II of the ADA, Defendants
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26 27 28	<sup>1</sup> Plaintiff left her Second Cause of Action under Title V for completeness of the record and in conformance with her proposed amended complaint (ECF No. 79-2). She acknowledges that the Court previously found that "individuals cannot be held liable under Title V of the ADA" and that this would impact the trial of this matter. (Order re: Motions for Summ. J. 9-10, ECF No. 54.)

1	interfered with Plaintiff's right to be free from discrimination by public entities as protected by		
2	Title II of the ADA.		
3	75. By denying or directing others to deny assistance completing paperwork to Ms. Martine		
4	in violation of Title II of the ADA, Defendants interfered with Plaintiff's right to be free from		
5	discrimination by public entities as protected by Title II of the ADA.		
6	76. By administering or ordering others to administer the licensing of fictitious business		
7	names and other licensing or certification programs administered through the Clerk-Recorder's		
8	Office in a manner that discriminates against persons who require assistance completing paper		
9	forms because of their disabilities, including Ms. Martinez, in violation of Title II of the ADA,		
10	Defendants interfered with Plaintiff's right to be free from discrimination by public entities as		
11	protected by Title II of the ADA.		
12	77. By utilizing or directing the use of the criteria of sight or another method of		
13	administration in the Clerk-Recorder's Office that has the effect of discriminating against blind		
14	individuals, such as Ms. Martinez, on the basis of disability, in violation of Title II of the ADA,		
15	Defendants interfered with Plaintiff's right to be free from discrimination by public entities as		
16	protected by Title II of the ADA.		
17	78. Defendants' interference constitutes both a past and ongoing violation of Title V of the		
18	ADA and its supporting regulations that inflicted and continue to inflict injuries for which		
19	Ms. Martinez has no adequate remedy at law.		
20	79. Equitable relief is necessary to stop Defendants' current and future violation of the ADA		
21	as legal relief is insufficient.		
22	80. Defendants' actions and conduct were intentional or were deliberately indifferent to		
23	Ms. Martinez's right to be free from discrimination by a public entity under Title II of the ADA.		
24	81. As a result of Defendants' violations, Ms. Martinez suffered and continues to suffer		
25	damages.		
26	82. Title V authorizes this Court to award reasonable attorneys' fees as part of the costs. 42		
27	U.S.C. § 12205.		
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1	THIRD CAUSE OF ACTION	
2	California Civil Code § 11135 (Defendant County of Alameda)	
3	83. Plaintiff re-alleges and incorporates herein all previously alleged paragraphs of the	
4	Complaint.	
5	84. Defendants' violations of Plaintiff's rights under Titles II and V of the federal ADA, 42	
6	U.S.C. §§ 12101 et seq., as described above, also constitute a violation of Plaintiff's rights under	
7	the California Civil Code section 11135 ("Section 11135").	
8	85. Plaintiff has a disability as defined by Section 11135. Cal. Civ. Code § 11135(c)	
9	(incorporating Cal. Gov't Code § 12926).	
10	86. Section 11135 provides that "[n]o person in the State of California shall, on the basis of	
11	mental disability, physical disability, [or] medical condition, be unlawfully denied full and equal	
12	access to the benefits of, or be unlawfully subjected to discrimination under, any program or	
13	activity that is conducted, operated, or administered by the state or by any state agency, is funded	
14	directly by the state, or receives any financial assistance from the state." Cal. Civ. Code §	
15	11135(a).	
16	87. Defendant County of Alameda has received funding or financial assistance from the State	
17	of California for every budget year from 2019 to present.	
18	88. Defendant County of Alameda is thereby obligated to comply with Section 11135.	
19	89. Because of her disability, Plaintiff was denied "full and equal access to the benefits of, or	
20	[was] unlawfully subjected to discrimination" during her attempts to file paper with the County	
21	of Alameda's Clerk-Recorder's Office, in violation of Section 11135(a).	
22	90. Defendant County of Alameda violated Section 11135 intentionally or with deliberate	
23	indifference to Ms. Martinez's rights protected thereunder to be free from disability-based	
24	discrimination.	
25	91. As a result of these violations, Plaintiff has suffered harm, and she is entitled to injunctive	
26	relief. Cal. Civ. Code § 11139.	
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1	92. As suit is in vindication of an important right affecting the public interest—to be free of	
2	disability discrimination—Plaintiff is entitled to attorneys' fees and costs. Cal. Civ. Code §	
3	1021.5.	
4	FOURTH CAUSE OF ACTION	
5	Disabled Persons Act (Cal. Civ. Code §§ 54-55.3) (All Defendants)	
6	93. Plaintiff re-alleges and incorporates herein all previously alleged paragraphs of the	
7	Complaint.	
8	94. Each violation of Ms. Martinez's rights under Titles II and V of the federal ADA, 42	
9	U.S.C. §§ 12101 et seq., as described above, also constitute a violation of her rights under the	
10	DPA. Cal. Civ. Code § 54(c).	
11	95. As a result of these violations, Plaintiff has suffered damages, including humiliation,	
12	indignity, and emotional distress.	
13	96. Whoever denies or interferes with the enjoyment of public facilities by, or otherwise	
14	interferes with the rights of, a person with a disability in violation of Civ. Code §§ 54, 54.1, or	
15	54.2 is liable to such person for a minimum statutory award of \$1,000 for each violation. Cal. Civ	
16	Code § 54.3(a).	
17	97. In addition to such an award, Plaintiff is entitled to damages and attorneys' fees and costs.	
18	Cal. Civ. Code § 54.3(a). Plaintiff seeks these remedies, as well as declaratory relief, but seeks no	
19	relief whatsoever under Cal. Civ. Code § 55.	
20	FIFTH CAUSE OF ACTION	
21	Declaratory Relief (All Defendants)	
22	98. Plaintiff re-alleges and incorporates herein all previously alleged paragraphs of the	
23	Complaint.	
24	99. Plaintiff contends that Defendants' practices and procedures with respect to providing	
25	staff assistance with paperwork, including their failure to reasonably modify policies and	
26	practices to accommodate people whose disabilities necessitate staff assistance as an auxiliary	
27	aid or service; their actions in operating, administering, or directing the Clerk-Recorder's Office	
28	and staff according to such policies; and their lack of adequate coordination and training to	

1	ensure compliance with the ADA, constitute discrimination in violation of Titles II and V of the		
2	ADA, Gov't Code § 11135, and the DPA.		
3	100. Defendants disagree with Plaintiff's contentions.		
4	101. A judicial declaration is necessary and appropriate at this time in order that each of the		
5	parties may know their respective rights and duties and act accordingly.		
6	WHEREFORE, Plaintiff requests relief as set forth below.		
7	RELIEF REQUESTED		
8	Plaintiff prays for judgment as follows:		
9	a) A declaration that Defendants are operating the Clerk-Recorder's Office in a manner		
10	that discriminates against people with disabilities, through their policies, actions, and		
11	inactions with respect to individuals who, because of their disabilities, require staff		
12	assistance with paperwork as an auxiliary aid or service;		
13	b) An order enjoining Defendants from violating Titles II and V of the ADA and Gov't		
14	Code § 11135, with respect to Ms. Martinez, through their policies, practices, and		
15	actions related to providing assistance with paperwork for people with disabilities;		
16	c) Compensatory damages to Ms. Martinez against Defendants, jointly and severally, for		
17	the humiliation, indignity, shock, and emotional distress that Ms. Martinez		
18	experienced as a result of the unlawful policies, practices, and conduct of Defendants		
19	and their agents and employees pursuant to Titles II and V of the ADA and the DPA;		
20	d) Statutory awards to Ms. Martinez against Defendants, jointly and severally, in the		
21	amount of \$1,000 for each violation of the DPA;		
22	e) An award of Plaintiff's reasonable attorneys' fees and costs against Defendants,		
23	jointly and severally; and		
24	f) Such other and further relief as the Court deems just and proper.		
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1	DATED: July 10, 2023	Respectfully submitted,
2		TRE LEGAL PRACTICE
3		/s/ Timothy R. Elder
4		/s/ Timothy R. Elder Timothy R. Elder
5		Attorneys for Plaintiff
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